

OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

THE PHILIPPINES: TYPHOONS 22 December 2004

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

In Brief

Appeal No. 26/04; Operations Update no. 2; Period covered: 9 – 21 December 2004; Appeal coverage (received/pledged/indicated): 72% (*The contributions list is being updated to reflect support received to date*)

Appeal history:

- Preliminary appeal launched on 2 December 2004 for CHF 2,011,000 (USD 1,749,036 or EUR 1,316,738) for three months for 250,000 beneficiaries.
- Appeal revised on 15 December 2004 for CHF 4,193,878 (USD 3,634,146 or EUR 2,731,487) for six months for 60,000 families (some 300,000 beneficiaries).
- Final report is due in September 2005.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 150,000.

Outstanding needs: approximately CHF 1.175 million (USD 1,017,500 or EUR 764,820)

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Southeast Asia Annual Appeal 01.66/2004 and 05AA057

Operational Summary: Following a joint launch with the UN Flash Appeal on 15 December in Manila, several Red Cross Red Crescent societies, through further approaches to their national governments and/or public fundraising have pledged/indicated additional contributions to the Federation's revised appeal. More partner support, however, is needed to ensure full, timely and quality humanitarian assistance to the most affected population.

Working prudently within the present resource mobilisation framework, the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) with the support of the Federation delegation in Manila, has been developing an implementation plan in coordination with its chapters and local government units to step up its longer term operation while continuing emergency activities in the worst affected areas. Tendering for most of the relief goods has progressed expeditiously and procurement of the major items is nearing completion, with distribution on schedule to start early in the new year. An experienced finance delegate for the newly established Federation delegation in the Philippines is urgently sought.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- In the Philippines: Victor Liozo, Secretary General, Philippine National Red Cross, pnrcnhq@redcross.org.ph, phone +632 5278384, fax +632 5270887; Floyd Barnaby, Head of Delegation, ifrc44@ifrc.org, phone +63 2 5275981, mobile: +63 915 570 4694, fax: +63 2 5270858;
- In Bangkok: Dr Ian Wilderspin, Head of Regional Disaster Risk Management Unit, or Jenny Iao, Liaison and Reporting Delegate, Southeast Asia Regional Delegation, Bangkok, Thailand, ifrc22@ifrc.org/ifrc43@ifrc.org, phone +66 2 6408211, fax +66 2 6408220;
- In Geneva: Charles Evans, SE Asia desk, email charles.evans@ifrc.org, phone +41 22 7304320, fax +41 22 733 0395.

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Background

Since mid November, floods and landslides provoked by a series of storms, including Typhoons Muifa and Namadol and two tropical depressions, have killed 1,062¹ people, injured 1,161 and affected more than three million, mostly on the northern island of Luzon. Some 550 people are still reported missing. Over 188,000 houses were totally or partially damaged. The combined impact has caused significant loss of life and damage to the agricultural economy, severe disruption to daily life and infrastructure in the country.

The PNRC has been in the forefront of response activities including distributions of food and household items, temporary shelter and health interventions. The Federation released immediately CHF 150,000 from DREF to support the relief operations of the PNRC and launched a preliminary appeal on 2 December. Building on identified priority needs and the capacity of PNRC, a revised appeal was launched on 15 December, jointly with the UN Flash Appeal, to support PNRC relief activities in the worst hit areas where humanitarian aid to date has been inadequate and affected households face an extended recovery period.

Operational developments

The Philippine government has wound down airlifts of food and other basic items on the Luzon region, large parts of which were isolated from the outside world due to landslides that destroyed roads and bridges. The coastal towns of General Nakar, Real and Infanta remain as the focus of their relief operation which will continue up to mid January. With improving conditions, many more people have left the evacuation centres to return to their *barangays* (villages). Roads to some of the worst hit areas, including the three coastal towns, are passable allowing the flow of relief supplies by land. The total road clearing is ongoing and expected to finish in one month. So far, about one third of the total volume of landslides is already cleared. Restoration of damaged roads and bridges, water supplies and schools are given priority in the government rehabilitation works. Local governments have also stepped up efforts to clear the streets and drains, moving away tons of mud and debris, for example in the three coastal towns through food-for-work programme in partnership with some aid agencies.



The Red Cross health station in Infanta is providing first aid treatment and basic medical care to the affected people.

Water systems in some affected areas in Aurora and Quezon provinces are yet to be restored and the water level in Infanta, for example, is still high and can cause new flooding in the event of further rains. According to the WHO, there is an increased risk of an outbreak of malaria and standing water has increased the likelihood of an outbreak of vector- and water-borne diseases. The government has mobilized medical teams for rapid health assessments, surveillance, psychosocial services and environmental health. Emergency drugs and medicines have also been provided. However, given the scale of the crisis and inadequate access to health care, safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, there is urgent need for additional water purifiers, medicines, health services and education, and medical monitoring.

The PNRC has to date distributed relief aid to some 45,000 displaced families (about 225,000 people) in the provinces of Quezon, Aurora, Nueva Ecija, Bicol region and some parts of Metro Manila which were most severely hit by the typhoons. As of 19 December, the PNRC from its own resources has dispatched to its chapters in affected areas a total of 7,572 relief packs, 10,863 blankets, 153 boxes of medicines, 4,317 bottles of mineral water, 2,551 rice sacks, 1,852 boxes of noodles, 781 boxes of sardines, 6,160 family packs, 1,297 boxes of compact food BP5, 848 boxes of biscuits, 4,490 jerry cans/water container, 950 pieces of plastic pail, 1,960 plastic basins, 3,950 cooking pots, 1,500 mosquito nets, 4,650 mats, 1,460 sacks used clothes, and other relief items such as body and laundry soap, diapers, eating utensils and carpentry tools. More than 1,590 people received medical treatment or first aid through Red Cross medical missions in Baler, Aurora province and Infanta, Quezon province. About 2,000 people

¹ These figures are based on the government report of 19 December on recovery and rehabilitation operations. Casualty figures from different sources remain incoherent. The PNRC reported 770 deaths, 849 injured and 206 missing.

were given psychosocial support. The first disaster response teams deployed to Real, Infanta and General Nakar have been replaced by new staff and volunteers from the neighbouring chapter.

On 20 December, the PNRC had an orientation and planning meeting at the national headquarters with the chapter administrators from affected provinces, including Aurora, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Camarines Norte, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Isabela, Cagayan and Kalinga. Beneficiary selection criteria were agreed together with an implementation plan using the funds resourced from the Federation and other donors, to address the relief and emergency rehabilitation needs of the most affected.

There has been an encouraging response to the revised appeal, which, including funds received/pledged has broken through the CHF three million mark – about 72% of the target figure of CHF 4.2 million. Among contributing governments and Red Cross and Red Crescent societies are those from: Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Japan, Korea (Rep.), Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Singapore, Sweden and Switzerland.

Additional support since the revised appeal launch in mid December has been indicated by Belgium (awaiting government decision), Britain, Canada, Japan, Sweden and Taiwan; the Norwegian Red Cross has also donated two containers of BP5, while Federal Express transported a consignment of multi-purpose tents from Denmark to the Philippines without charge to the Red Cross Red Crescent.

Meanwhile the PNRC has received a substantial amount of direct foreign and local donations which will enable the society to complement the government's recovery and rehabilitation efforts to provide longer-term support to the affected families. On 21 December, the Spanish government pledged 300,000 euros to the PNRC for purchase of more relief supplies, in addition to an earlier in-kind donation of EUR 66,000 euros and another pledge of EUR 160,000 euros from a Spanish provincial government through the Spanish Red Cross, which is also implementing an ECHO contract of almost EUR 400,000.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact

Emergency relief (food and non-food)

Objective: 60,000 affected families (approximately 300,000 people) receive basic food and non-food items to help recover their losses arising from the damage caused by the recent severe weather disturbances.

Progress/Achievements

The following selection criteria have been agreed by the PNRC orientation and planning meeting held on 20 December:

- For food items: priority will be given to those whose houses were totally damaged and those being provided with shelter materials
- For non-food items: priority will be given to families whose houses were totally destroyed.

The PNRC in close coordination with its chapters will focus in the coming weeks on the following activities:

- Identifying target beneficiaries and preparing a master list of beneficiaries;
- Pre-positioning supplies (identify warehouse if none exists);
- Scheduling distribution in coordination with the local government units (LGU);
- Identifying logistical requirements, for example, vehicles and volunteers for actual distributions;
- Ensuring monthly reporting.

The Federation logistics delegate has been working closely with his counterpart in the PNRC on procurements of food and non-food items since his arrival in Manila. The tendering process for food and non-food items was completed on 17 December following the Federation logistics procedures. Ten multi-purpose tents arrived in the Manila on 17 December courtesy of the free airfreight service provided by Federal Express. With the exception of these tents, blankets, water, sanitation testing kits and new emergency health kits, all procurements can be made locally to save cost and time on delivery. It is expected that first distribution will take place early January.

To mark the Christmas festival – a widely observed holiday in the Philippines – on 24 December, a Red Cross team led by the PNRC chairman will join affected families in Infanta, Real and Camp Nakar. The Red Cross team will cook food for the families and distribute family kits for 5,000 families and toys for the children.

Shelter

Objective: 5,000 affected families (approximately 25,000 people) are able to return home through the provision of semi-permanent shelter kits.

Progress/Achievements

The PNRC disaster response teams are conducting survey of totally damaged houses in every village in worst affected areas for possible rehabilitation activities. The government is considering relocating the inhabitants of some disaster-prone villages to other safer areas. In Infanta, the local government is planning to relocate 5,000 families.

The PNRC is considering a partnership with some local reputed agencies to ensure a holistic approach in providing shelter material to selected families. Continuous donor support to this sector will be needed to help more affected families restore their homes.

Health and water and sanitation

Objective: 25,000 families (approximately 125,000 people) have improved access to primary health care services, water and sanitation facilities.

Progress/Achievements

The PNRC initial assessment for health, water and sanitation sector identified the need for medicines, chlorination and or purification tablets, and medical personnel. A Red Cross health station has been set up in the elementary school of Infanta since 11 December providing first aid treatments, basic health consultation, dispensing of basic medicines, referrals and transport of patients to district hospitals. The station is run by a team of volunteer nurses and in close coordination with the health authority and other aid agencies. The nurses also support the government medical team in consultation, treatment and health sessions. Upper respiratory tract infection, wounds, hypertension and headache, diarrhea have been common complaints. Up to 18 December, the Red Cross health station treated nearly 600 patients and assisted over 700 patients at the government medical station.

In addition, a team of 17 volunteer medical professionals from St. Luke's medical centre provided medical services during 11-12 December covering three villages in Baler, with more than 1,000 patients treated. Another two-member assessment team in Dinggalan also responded to emergency first aid and medical needs and highlighted health concerns and the need for health monitoring for 687 families staying at two evacuation centres.

During a visit on 18 December to Infanta by PNRC headquarters staff from Disaster Management Service (DMS) and Community Health and Nursing Service (CHNS), the rehabilitation of health facilities and services at village levels supported by the appeal and ECHO were discussed with the local authority. A sectoral meeting is due to be held today (22 December) with focus on the rehabilitation plan of the municipality. PNRC will participate in the meeting.

The immediate response of the PNRC to health and medical needs of the affected people has prevented outbreaks of diarrhea and other water-borne diseases. The intervention is particularly timely in Dinggalan – a municipality where most of the affected are indigenous, access by road remains difficult and medical personnel has been insufficient. The availability of medicines and medical supplies in the PNRC health station has also filled up the gap of health services substantially.

The main constraints facing the PNRC in implementing the health components of the appeal have been:

- Difficult access to the remote areas for detailed health assessment;
- Limited assessment and coordination skills of staff and volunteers on health, water and sanitation;
- Health, water and sanitation need to be integrated in the disaster response training and other aspects of relief operations; and
- Lack of health volunteers and emergency health kits for immediate deployment.

The PNRC is mobilising more health volunteers to implement the appeal objective and at the same time procuring essential medicines, hygiene kits and health station equipment according to the Sphere standards and the Federation logistics catalogue. Purchase of new emergency health kits (NEHK) and water and sanitation testing kits is underway. The plan to rehabilitate and equip health facilities still await more donor response to be implemented.

Institutional capacity building

Objective: The capacity of the PNRC and the affected communities to respond to emergency situations is increased.

The revised appeal has received encouraging donor response and allowed procurement of relief items. However, it is also crucial to empower the communities to better respond to future disasters. Further donor support is essential to enable the PNRC to initiate disaster response trainings, establish and equip disaster response teams in the affected communities.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

The joint launch of the revised appeal with the UN Flash Appeal was widely covered by international and national media. As the disaster has moved out of the headlines, it has become crucial to maintain media interest through regular updates of Red Cross activities. A special focus has been created on the homepage of the Federation website and a news stories on water and sanitation published. The PNRC communications department continues to issue regular press releases and is recruiting a short-term freelance journalist to help enhance media coverage of the society's relief activities and advocate humanitarian needs of the affected. A digital camera and a laptop are also being purchased to facilitate communication work.

Coordination

The PNRC has been in close and regular consultation with national and local government agencies and other humanitarian organizations on various sectors of relief activities. Meetings are also regularly held between the PNRC, the Federation and the Spanish Red Cross to discuss and harmonize relief operation plans.

The Federation head of delegation maintains daily contact with the PNRC chairman, secretary general and managers of various departments, providing advice and technical assistance as necessary to facilitate the implementation of the PNRC relief operation.

The logistics delegate visited Infanta with the PNRC DMS and CHNS and Spanish Red Cross delegates on 18 December to evaluate the situation and coordinate with local officials on upcoming relief distribution plan. Together with the PNRC secretary general, the head of delegation is visiting affected areas in Quezon today (22 December). The delegation is working on an operational budget based on current donor response to the revised appeal. An experienced finance delegate is urgently sought to support the delegation in managing funds and budgets and advice the PNRC on financial matters.

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